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# DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE



IN CHARGE OF

EDNA L. FOLEY, R.N.\*

## “THE CHILD IN THE MIDST”

THE NEW YORK-CHICAGO CHILD WELFARE EXHIBIT

By CURRIE D. BRECKINRIDGE, R.N.

Chicago Visiting Tuberculosis Nurse

A THOUGHT is like the circles made by a pebble on the surface of the water; it drops silently, the circles rise and spread, the first merging into the second, the second into the third—and finally they are lost to sight on the bosom of the lake.

A Sunday school teacher in New York City thought how helpful it would be to have an exhibit of the work done by the children of her Sunday school. Someone who saw that exhibit thought how beneficial it would be to have an exhibit of the work and conditions of many children, and so the New York Child Welfare Exhibit grew,—“after three years’ work on the part of hundreds of New York citizens most interested in children.” A Chicagoan, seeing the exhibit, conceived the idea of reproducing it in Chicago; it seemed an almost impossible undertaking, but when “A woman wills” things are apt to move along most rapidly. Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr., found that her offer to furnish the means of bringing the exhibit westward was enthusiastically received by the earnest people of Chicago, who gladly volunteered their time, strength, and intellect in the service of the children of their city.

Large and generous as was the gift itself,—for the cost of bringing the exhibit was fifty thousand dollars, in addition to the one hundred thousand in New York,—in the final summing up of things, the kindly, helpful interest of both Mr. and Mrs. McCormick, to say nothing of the untiring efforts of Mrs. Emmons Blaine, will be as far-reaching in their effect as the more easily-given financial support.

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\* Material for this department should be sent directly to its editor, 105 West Monroe Street, Chicago.

THE VISITING NURSE



Thus, with only a few weeks for preparation, the people of Chicago united to produce the Child Welfare Exhibit, an undertaking unsurpassed even in Chicago by anything except the great World's Fair of '93.

Important parts of the preparation where the instructions and conferences held for the benefit of committees and the placing of many volunteers in charge of sections as explainers. The lectures given to the two thousand explainers were, in themselves, of vast benefit,—broadening the vision of the many social workers so that each one was better able to realize her responsibility as a necessary part of the splendid whole.

On Thursday, May 11, at six o'clock, the doors were thrown open by Miss Addams, or "Jane Addams," as she is affectionately called by all sorts and conditions of people, and fitly does she embody the meaning in that good, old name—"A gracious gift of God."

When one is told "to write an article in which she touches on those things of particular interest to nurses," she is given such a wide range that it seems impossible to complete it in a few thousand words. For is not everything of particular interest to nurses? Surely the woman who receives from the doctor's hands the tiny babe and hears its first weak cry is interested in all things pertaining to its welfare. Surely the nurse, who has watched over a patient in her days of suffering and finally has seen her return home, is interested in the conditions awaiting that patient and is anxious to lessen the difficulties of that tired mother, and so all home conditions become of interest to the nurse. Or perhaps her sympathies have been touched, and consequently her knowledge broadened, through some humble worker, one of the many maimed and crippled in the great industrial world, and the nurse has finally seen him leave the hospital, weak and discouraged, wondering how in the future the wolf is to be kept from the door of his home, and she becomes alive to conditions in the great industrial world through her interest in his welfare; and so in the daily routine of the hospital, touching as she does the great facts of life and death, of suffering and self-sacrifice, she learns that the study of mankind is "man."

As the building in which the exhibit was held covers twice as much space as the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York City, the exhibit here covered twice as much, for it was Chicago added to New York. The centre of the Coliseum was reserved for "living exhibition" and daily groups of children gathered in "The Court," a huge open space, marked off with ropes and Corinthian columns, hung with paper garlands of laurel leaves and roses, and most effectively topped with big, blue and white plaster medallions of the Della Robbia Bambino. In connection with the Bambino occurred a pathetic incident. One after-

noon, a Jewish couple, a humble toil-worn pair, brought their little son to be examined. The child had two fingers badly deformed by elephantiasis and the mother said: "We brought our little son because that baby (pointing to the picture of the Bambino) had two fingers just like our boy and we knew we'd get him cured here."

Facing the Court, near the main entrance, was Mr. Lorado Taft's imposing group "The Blind," and many halted, arrested by the beauty of that baby face, and passed on, haunted by the tragedy of the lives of its unseeing elders. Continuing north, one came to the platform where daily the Boy Scouts displayed their skill and the unconsciously-acquired manliness which their drills impart to them.

Philanthropy was the first main division and the subdivisions under it were, Clubs, Associations and Settlements. Beyond were the "Model Homes" at a "moderate cost"; "Good and Bad Food" counters; "Three Simple Meals for a Child," etc. Then the "Work and Wages" section with illustrations taken from life, one of the most realistic being the willow plumes made by tiny children. How many of us realize that the thousands of knots, tied in these graceful, beautiful feathers, are tied by wee baby fingers, as yet unprotected by labor laws, but far too early acquainted with the double tragedy of long hours and under pay? Close to this exhibit was that of the Juvenile Courts, and perhaps one of the most effective posters was the one showing Father Knickerbocker in a Shoe, with a cat-o-nine-tails, the children fleeing from it in terror, but some, nevertheless, caught within reach of its cruel thongs. In the next, Father Knickerbocker has reformed. He is sitting in a big arm chair and the children are climbing confidently upon his knee, "to tell him all about it." The next section was given over to a toy shop and a child's play-room furnished in a most fascinating manner with furniture evolved from boxes of all sizes. Beyond was a miniature playground, where a sand pile and a slide, in a very restricted place, suggested endless possibilities for a small city back-yard.

The Library and Museum exhibits were interesting in their completeness, and were made more so by the children always to be found in their books or engrossed in the study of the birds or flowers so well displayed.

On the second floor of the Coliseum were the so-called "Live Exhibits," being the actual work being done by children of the Public Schools. In the court also were drills and dances and games and songs given by the school children and the play-ground children. When those fresh young voices rose clear and sweet in "The Star Spangled Banner," many paused involuntarily, touched by the sweep and joy of the music, and as one saw the progress of the Chicago schools and realized what

splendid work Mrs. Young has done as Superintendent of Schools, every woman felt a thrill of pride. Whatever may have been Dr. Osler's theory in regard to man, Mrs. Young has demonstrated that woman is at the height of her usefulness at sixty!

Another exhibit, showing how the wheels of progress have turned, was that of the Sunday schools, with modern kindergarten methods; and of "institutions" which placed the child in a private home and used the original "Home" only as a temporary station for the little one consigned to it.

Nearly one-half of the floor space was devoted to the Health Section, over the main entrance to which was a little red light that went out every twenty seconds, flashing the death—somewhere in this busy world—of an infant, from a preventable disease. How quick the flash comes around again, as we stand aghast, awed by that object lesson. Nor is our burden lessened when we see Time, with his scythe, cutting down, as the procession passes, every fourth baby born, teaching us the same sad lesson,—that every fourth child is dying of a preventable disease.

Next to a perfectly-equipped incubator room of the Lying-In Hospital was a typically dirty kitchen, prepared in haste for the stork's arrival, and the obstetrical outfit and careful preparations showed the possibilities of regarding the rules of aseptic technic, even in a very poor home.

Everywhere one turned were colored posters, maps, and figures, living exhibits teaching the right way to live and showing the results of ignorance. One heard over and over, "Oh, if I had only known!" And above all was a huge poster showing what Chicago owes to its children, and although much has been done, the debit side is large. One cannot go into detail now, nor is that necessary, for there will, in due time, be published a more complete report even than the *Hand Book of the Exhibit*, interesting though that was.

One of the exhibits that interested the people most was the one on the "Prevention of Blindness," which was quite remarkable in its scope, as well as in its simplicity.

The exhibit on "The Care of the Teeth" was excellently planned. One mother whose boy had developed tuberculous glands was deeply impressed when the nurse told her of the twenty organisms found on the teeth and exclaimed, "Do those bugs jest fly down the throat?" One small boy passed by holding his aching jaw; the nurse seized him, cleaned out the tooth, meanwhile offering the information that the mouth is the chief gateway of disease; tuberculosis, pneumonia, grippe, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and whooping cough can all find lodging in the teeth in that one little hole. The small boy's mother went away convinced that he had better have the tooth looked after.

Then there was a demonstration showing the effect of unpasteurized milk from the tuberculous cow on the unfortunate infant fed with it, and the same milk, after pasteurization, being fed to an infant the same age as the first, but twice its size.

In the exhibit of the Tuberculosis Institute the nurses made paper drinking cups, weighed and measured children, and explained the splendid maps and pictures showing the hold of the disease on Chicago. There was a doll dressed as a child should be who slept outdoors. (One mother came to get directions for the making of a sleeping bag for her little boy; upon being questioned, it finally developed that the little boy was a tall youth of twenty-four.) The Health Alphabet written by one of the nurses of the Tuberculosis Institute and published in the June JOURNAL attracted much attention, as did the effective and striking screens and the poster of the visiting nurse, just across the way.

The Eugenics Department was always crowded and it was interesting to note with what perfect unconsciousness of self, boys and girls, men and women studied the facts of life, or listened in rapt attention to the explainer's information. One woman did remark, "This is not a thing for girls to know," but when the explainer replied, a little sharply, that "the girls would soon be women and the sooner they realized that motherhood was a profession of which to be proud, the better for the world," the woman admitted that perhaps she might be wrong.

Next to the Eugenics Department was an exhibit consisting only of some half dozen photographs and yet that was one of the most pathetic of the whole exhibit,—The Frances Juvenile House—"The only Institution in the world that cares for and educates the innocent children afflicted with venereal diseases. The ultimate aim is to lift these children out of a life of ignorance and neglect into a future of hope and usefulness. It accommodates fifteen—it should accommodate a thousand.

Turning from the tragedy and pathos of this series of pictures, one is cheered by the view of the Baby Welfare Exhibit. A live exhibit it surely was, for the mothers and the babies were brought from their district in a bus and here the Conference was held, just as it would have been held at the Station in the District. The babies were weighed, examined, and the mothers advised, admonished or encouraged, as the case might demand. They were protected from the crowds by glass screens, around which was a railing, and the crowds surged and thronged, anxious to get a glimpse of "The Baby." Tired mothers and anxious fathers came to the nurses for advice about the baby. In connection with this exhibit again was found a contrast, for there was a room from the Stock Yards neighborhood in which the nurse did milk modification and demonstrated that even in a home which she found filthy she could

and did make an impression on the whole family. There also was the home-made ice box, which was to be seen in several exhibits. Next to this exhibit was that of the baby tent, under the auspices of the Visiting Nurses' Association, and in two of its little cribs were displayed dolls improperly dressed (an Italian bambino swaddled up to its neck and a Polish baby tied up in a pillow) while an American doll-baby, kicking in the undisguised comfort of a little shirt and a single napkin, in a third dressing in hot weather.

One woman came to the explainer, saying, "If I'd only known I might have my baby to-day." "Yes," said the explainer, "but you know now, go and tell some other mother that she may be saved the need of lamenting her baby." "I will! I will! for if I'd only known." One elderly visitor was much incensed because the "dear little things did not have night-gowns put on them when they were weighed." She said, "It wasn't modest!"

A little space should be devoted to the Conferences. The crowds were so great that they could not be held in the Coliseum, so the use of Grace Episcopal Church was kindly offered by the rector, and the Conferences seemed to partake somewhat of the spirit of the sacred edifice. Its dim coolness seemed like an oasis after the intense heat and throngs of the Coliseum next door. The programme of these Conferences contained a grouping of topics and a classification of subject matter which it was hoped would prove of benefit to the student of Child-Care in the city.

Perhaps the only discordant note heard at any one of these discussions was sounded when Dr. Cabot said to an audience in which there were many nurses that he did not believe nurses made good social workers; that their training was of such a character as to make their outlook too narrow for sympathy. Naturally, the nurses took exception to these remarks: But, after all, criticism, however undeserved, may be beneficial, and it might be well for those who have the moulding of the women who are to represent our training schools (for the pupil nurse of to-day is the leader of to-morrow) to see to it that they do not turn out mere machines. One of the most significant of the Conferences was the one on the morning of the last day, when Dr. Hugh Patrick graphically pointed out the needs of the epileptic, the last one of our dependent children to be left absolutely unprovided for by the State of Illinois. The speaker who perhaps drew the largest crowd, and who was listened to with deep interest, was Dr. Booker T. Washington.

The public that came to scan and remained to study this large exhibit marvelled that so much could have been assembled in a short three months, but to the workers, the exhibit represented a truly stupendous



undertaking, made possible only by perfect co-operation of “many men and many minds.” One short article could not do justice to, but perhaps it will suffice to convey at least the spirit of the Child Welfare Exhibit, where race, creed and color were lost sight of in a common human interest, where, as the circles widened, French and German, Japanese and Russian, Jew and Gentile, Black and White, forgot their prejudices and remembered only that “Their Souls were all alike,” and understood how “God’s possible may be known through this world’s loving.”

MUNICIPAL TUBERCULOSIS SANITARIUM, CHICAGO

RESOLUTIONS GOVERNING THE CLASSIFICATION, ELIGIBILITY AND SALARIES OF NURSES IN GRADE II, DIVISION A, MEDICAL SERVICE, OF THE MUNICIPAL TUBERCULOSIS SANITARIUM.

I—CLASSIFICATION :

Be it Resolved,

- (1) That Nurses in the Dispensary Department of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium shall be classified in accordance with the Municipal Civil Service classification in Division A, Medical Service, as follows:

- Grade II—Field Nurses,
- Grade III—Supervising Nurses,
- Grade IV—Superintendent of Nurses.

- (2) That for purposes of administration, Field Nurses, Grade II, shall be further classified according to duties performed, as follows:

- Group I—Field Nurses,
- Group II—Assistant Head Field Nurses,
- Group III—Head Field Nurses.

- (3) That the salaries of Field Nurses in the above-named Groups of Grade II shall be fixed as follows:

Group I—Field Nurses .....	\$70.00 per month
Group II—Assistant Head Field Nurses .....	80.00 per month
Group III—Head Field Nurses .....	90.00 per month

and that advancement from one group to the next higher shall be made with regard to efficiency and length of service.